

REPRESENTATIVE DRIEHAUS CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER COMPETITIVE ENGINE

WASHINGTON, DC—Representative Steve Driehaus today announced that he has led a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers pressing for the authorization of the Joint Strike Fighter Competitive Engine Program in the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). In a letter to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO) and ranking member Howard P. McKeon (R-CA), Rep. Driehaus and his colleagues underscored that the competitive engine program promises long-term cost savings and better and more reliable equipment for our armed forces.

“The Joint Strike Fighter will eventually make up 90 percent of our tactical air forces, and we need to ensure that our military has the greatest capability at the best cost to American taxpayers. We learned from the ‘Great Engine War’ involving the F-15 and F-16 that a competitive engine program will help us meet that goal. Authorizing this program is a smart decision for our armed forces and a responsible use of public funds,” said Rep. Driehaus.

The House version of the NDAA authorized funding for the Competitive Engine Program, which was removed from the Senate version. The bill is expected in conference in coming weeks.

Representative Driehaus has been a vocal supporter of the Joint Strike Fighter Competitive Engine Program. Earlier this year, [he supported the House reauthorization of the program](#), and

[fought for the \\$560 million included for the program](#)

as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

[In April, he was joined by 24 House members](#)

urging the President to support the Competitive Engine Program.

Text of the lawmakers’ letter follows.

The Honorable Ike Skelton

Chairman

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se Armed Services Committee

2120 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon Ranking Member House Armed Services Committee 2340
Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton and Ranking Member McKeon:

In anticipation of a conference on the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, we ask that you and your colleagues remain supportive of competitive procurement practices for essential military technology in order to preserve the capabilities of our nation’s fighting forces.

Specifically, we ask that you work with your Senate colleagues to maintain full funding, continued development, and procurement of a competitive propulsion system for the F-35 Lightning II (Joint Strike Fighter) as adopted by the House of Representatives.

Congress has consistently and legitimately supported the research, development, testing, and evaluation of a competitive propulsion system for the F-35 Lightning II since Fiscal Year 1996. Continued funding of an alternate propulsion system will reaffirm the strength that competitive markets have demonstrated in initiating technological advances and American ingenuity.

Furthermore, concerns regarding the ability of the current contractor to remain on budget continue to circulate throughout the business and defense communities. Most recently, on July 27, 2009, Bloomberg News reported that the Air Force variant of the F-35 has experienced "fairly significant growth," driving the 30-year price per engine up 24 percent from \$6.7 million to \$8.3 million. Moreover, the development cost of the primary F-35 propulsion system has grown by \$1.872 billion, a 38 percent increase from the original \$4.828 billion in Fiscal Year 2002. Additionally, the F-35 program manager has reported that F135 engine procurement cost estimates have increased between 38 to 43 percent from December, 2005 through December, 2008.

The competitive propulsion program has not experienced any cost growth since its inception, and the contractor has indicated a willingness to negotiate on fixed price terms for the remaining development and production of the competitive propulsion system. As the marketplace has demonstrated countless times, competition protects private citizens and the government from cost increases by a single provider.

In the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010 Committee Report, the House Armed Services Committee noted that there exist several non-financial advantages of procuring a competitive propulsion system for the F-35. These include better engine performance, improved contractor responsiveness, a more robust industrial base, increased engine reliability, and improved operational readiness. In an era of economic uneasiness and increasing security threats, it is only proper to invest in technology that will save taxpayers money and improve the capabilities of our fighting forces.

For the first time in American aviation history, the United States will procure a single engine aircraft that will comprise 90 percent of our tactical air forces. The Department of Defense intends to purchase 2,500 F-35s. The international allies of the United States have signaled an interest for an additional 600 aircraft to supplement their own fleets. Forecasting a demand of 3,000 aircraft, procuring propulsion systems from two contractors will help ensure timely delivery of F-35s to our military departments and allies.

Since 2007, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has cited its expectation that "...savings of 10.3 to 12.3 percent would recoup that investment, and actual experience from past engine competitions suggests that it is reasonable to assume that competition on the JSF [Joint Strike Fighter] engine program could yield savings of at least that much." In fact, the developers of the competitive propulsion system estimate savings of up to 21 percent. Funding the remaining \$850 million to complete development provides long term cost control on a \$100 billion engine program that would result in a savings for taxpayers of \$21 billion conservatively. The DOD's assertion that the competitive procurement of an alternate propulsion system will result in a loss of aircraft is fundamentally flawed.

It is critically important that the National Defense Authorization Act conferees maintain full funding for the continued development and procurement of a competitive propulsion system for

the F-35. We thank you for your continued efforts to responsibly engage in competitive procurement practices that historically have proven to result in more capable propulsion systems, save the taxpayers money, and improve the operational readiness of American military forces.

Sincerely,

Representative Steve Driehaus, (OH-01) Representative Geoff Davis, (KY-04) Representative Jean Schmidt, (OH-02)

Representative Mike Turner, (OH-03)

Representative Marcy Kaptur, (OH-09)

Representative Steve Buyer, (IN-04)

Representative Joe Wilson, (SC-02)

Representative Steve Austria, (OH-07)

Representative Mary Fallin, (OK-05)

Representative Brad Ellsworth, (IN-08)

Representative Tim Ryan, (OH-17)

Representative Charlie Wilson, (OH-06)

Representative Steven LaTourette, (OH-14)

Representative Jim Jordan, (OH-04)

Representative Carol Shea-Porter, (NH-01)

Representative Robert Latta, (OH-05)

Representative Betty Sutton, (OH-13)

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